



IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link including:

connecting traffic from a service module to a first physical module having a link layer framer that is connected to [[a]]the protected egress link, wherein the link layer framer includes a queue for storing the traffic; and

connecting the traffic through the first physical module through a pooling switch to a second physical module that is connected to an alternate egress link, wherein the traffic in the second physical module is not processed through any link layer framer.
2. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the first physical module contains an optical link interface module.
3. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the second physical module contains an optical link interface module.
4. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the first physical module contains an electrical link interface module.
5. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the second physical module contains an electrical link interface module.
6. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the first physical module contains a module that places the traffic in proper form for a pooling switch.
7. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the second physical module contains a module that places the traffic in proper form for a pooling switch.

8. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the traffic through the protected egress link and the ~~protecting~~ alternate egress link have a synchronization difference smaller than 50ms.

9. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the traffic through the protected egress link and the ~~protecting~~ alternate egress link behave in a manner to the user as if there is no synchronization difference between the two traffic flows.

10. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the pooling switch enables multiple logical streams to be included in one physical interface.

11. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the pooling switch is a packet switch.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein pooling switch is a time division multiplexing switch.

13. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link including:

connecting traffic ~~[[from]]~~to a service module ~~[[to]]~~from a first physical module having a link layer framer that is connected to ~~[[a]]~~the protected ingress link, wherein the link layer framer includes a queue for storing the traffic; and

connecting the traffic through ~~the first~~ a second physical module that is connected to an alternate ingress link through a pooling switch to ~~a second~~ the first physical module ~~that is connected to an alternate ingress link~~, wherein the traffic in the second physical module is not processed through any link layer framer.

14. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1~~[[3]]~~, wherein the service module decides from information within ~~[[the]]~~an input traffic stream to the service module where to output the input traffic stream.

15. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the first physical module contains an optical link interface module.
16. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the second physical module contains an optical link interface module.
17. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the first physical module contains an electrical link interface module.
18. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the second physical module contains an electrical link interface module.
19. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the first physical module contains a module that places the traffic in proper form for a pooling switch.
20. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the second physical module contains a module that places the traffic in proper form for a pooling switch.
21. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the traffic through the protected ingress link and the ~~protecting~~ alternate ingress link have a synchronization difference smaller than 50ms.
22. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the traffic through the protected ingress link and the ~~protecting~~ alternate ingress link behave in a manner to the user as if there is no synchronization difference between the two traffic flows.
23. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the pooling switch enables multiple logical streams to be included in one physical interface.

24. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the pooling switch is a packet switch.
25. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein pooling switch is a time division multiplexing switch.
26. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link including:
- connecting traffic from a service module to a first pooling switch[[]];
 - connecting the first pooling switch to a first physical module having a link layer framer that is connected to the protected egress link, wherein the link layer framer includes a queue for storing the traffic; and
 - connecting the traffic through the first physical module through a second pooling switch to a second physical module that is connected to an alternate egress link, wherein the traffic in the second physical module is not processed through any link layer framer.
27. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link including:
- connecting traffic ~~[[from]]~~to a service module ~~[[to]]~~from a first pooling switch[[]];
 - connecting the first pooling switch to a first physical module having a link layer framer that is connected to the protected ingress link, wherein the link layer framer includes a queue for storing the traffic; and
 - connecting the traffic through ~~the first~~ a second physical module that is connected to an alternate ingress link through a second pooling switch to ~~a second~~ the first physical module ~~that is connected to an alternate ingress link,~~ wherein the traffic in the second physical module is not processed through any link layer framer.
28. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link including:
- connecting traffic from a service module to a first pooling switch[[]];
 - connecting the first pooling switch to a first physical module having a link layer framer, wherein the link layer framer includes a queue for storing the traffic;
 - connecting the traffic through the first physical module through a second pooling switch to a second physical module that is connected to the protected egress link, wherein the traffic in the second physical module is not processed through any link layer framer; and

connecting the traffic through the first physical module through the second pooling switch to a third physical module that is connected to an alternate egress link, wherein the traffic in the third physical module is not processed through any link layer framer.

29. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 28, wherein the ~~[[third]]~~ first physical module does not include a link interface module.

30. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 28, wherein 1:N protection is provided.

31. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link including:

connecting traffic ~~[[from]]~~ to a service module ~~[[to]]~~ from a first pooling switch~~[[,]]~~;
connecting the first pooling switch to a first physical module having a link layer framer,
wherein the link layer framer includes a queue for storing the traffic;

connecting the traffic through ~~the first~~ a second physical module that is connected to the protected ingress link through a second pooling switch to ~~a second~~ the first physical module ~~that is connected to the protected ingress link,~~ wherein the traffic in the second physical module is not processed through any link layer framer; and

connecting the traffic through ~~the first~~ a third physical module that is connected to an alternate ingress link through the second pooling switch to ~~a third~~ the first physical module ~~that is connected to an alternate ingress link,~~ wherein the traffic in the third physical module is not processed through any link layer framer.

32. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 31, wherein the ~~[[third]]~~ first physical module does not include a link interface module.

33. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 31, wherein 1:N protection is provided.

34. (Currently Amended) A device for switching traffic comprising:

A first pooling switch configured to be connected to a plurality of physical modules,
wherein each of the plurality of physical modules is configured to not process traffic through a link layer framer;

A link layer framer ~~module~~ connected to the first pooling switch~~[[,]]~~;

A second pooling switch connected to the link layer framer ~~module~~~~[[,]]~~; and

A service module connected to the second pooling switch.